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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [GV](#)
SUBJECT: REPORTERS CHALLENGE DADIS AT AUDIT PRESS CONFERENCE

REF: A. CONAKRY 00503
[1](#)B. CONAKRY 00538

Classified By: POLOFF JULIA TULLY FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

[1](#)1. (U) On September 9, CNDD President Moussa Dadis Camara held a press conference at the national radio and television center (RTG) with national and international press to discuss restarting the audits that will examine the entire 24-year period of the Conte regime. First Vice President and Minister of Defense General Sekouba Konate was originally scheduled to conduct the press conference, but Dadis replaced him. The diplomatic community as a whole was not invited although some diplomatic contacts reported receiving an initial invitation that was later revoked by the MFA over the phone.

[1](#)2. (U) Beginning the conference with lengthy remarks, Dadis embarked on familiar themes: his honest character, the untrustworthy nature of politicians, and the desire of the Guinean people to keep him in power. Several times he used the phrase, "If I am a candidate..." Dadis also stated that he reluctantly agreed to conduct the audits at this time knowing that it would be interpreted by some as preventing certain candidates from participating in the upcoming elections. Nevertheless, by popular demand, the audits would begin. Audit Commissioner Ousamne Kaba then also spoke at length listing many of the projects, companies, and government entities that would be investigated.

REPORTERS QUESTION TRANSPARENCY

[1](#)3. (SBU) About half of the questions from reporters that followed provided an easy platform for Dadis to expound on favorite topics, one being the CNDD's fight against illegal drugs. However, several reporters challenged Dadis directly, even asking pointed follow-up questions. One of the first questions focused on the unrest in 2007 and the deaths of protestors, wondering why these events had not been included in the audit? The reporter also asked for clarity about the audit -- who exactly would be investigated? He questioned whether the CNDD would investigate individuals, companies, a government, or a system. The audience reacted negatively to the reporter who strained to be heard, while Dadis urged quiet. Dadis avoided a direct answer, but replied that that was why a civilian would not be a good choice for leading Guinea -- a strong military hand was needed to keep control as civilians "cannot put a hand" on even a corporal.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Two other reporters focused on conflict of interest and transparency issues, pointing out that Dadis and other CNDD members have relationships with individuals and institutions that will be investigated. Continuing this line of questioning, the last reporter asked about the involvement of one Audit Commission member in the sale of a mine. Would he allow a member of his cabinet to be prosecuted if charged with embezzlement? Dadis replied that no one is above the law

and pointed to the arrest of military officers and members of late President Conte's family. He did not see why a minister would be exempted.

COMMENT

15. (C) Recent CNDD interventions such as the temporary stoppage of cell phone texting capability (reftel) and the ban on political discussions on privately-owned radio demonstrate the tenuous nature of freedom of expression under the CNDD. In other public events with Dadis, audience members have been forcibly removed for allowing a cell phone to ring, or for asking relatively innocuous questions. The young reporters who challenged Dadis yesterday were focused, probing, and allowed to speak. Interestingly, it also appears that Dadis is continuing his cat and mouse game with respect to his anticipated candidacy. Despite telling the International Contact Group on September 3 that he plans to run (reftel B), he has yet to formally announce his candidacy. End comment.
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